Public Meeting
Boston to Montreal High Speed Rail Feasibility and Planning Study
November 25, 2002
Montreal, Quebec

Thirty people attended the public meeting in Montreal, Quebec on November 25, 2002. Below is a summary of questions and comments.

Q. Your ridership revenue only shows fares generated by passengers who travel the Boston to Montreal corridor exclusively, aren't there other sources of potential revenues from people who make intercity connections (from outside the corridor)?

A. *Yes. There are intercity opportunities, like a link between North and South Stations in Boston. The study gives a general magnitude of ridership. Phase II will look at inter city connections in more detail.*

Q. What would happen if you projected ridership at 15 cents a mile?

A. *We'll look at more price options in Phase II.*

Q. When you looked at the sources of financing, what ratio of private versus public funds did you consider?

A. *There are no recommendations on a ratio of spending between private and public sources. All opportunities, including private will be explored. There is a growing creativity of getting the private sector to invest in rail. For example, the State of Florida is offering land development opportunities to investors willing to finance rail service.*

Q. When will the Phase 2 start?

A. *Funds for Phase II have been requested from the US Congress. It is likely to start in the first half of 2003 and will take a year to complete.*

Q. What is the involvement of the Montréal Metropolitan Community (CMM)?

A. *CMM hosts the meeting today. Like the Québec Ministry of Transportation (MTQ) and Transport Canada, the CMM is an observer in the Study. The CMM has an interest in having this study being known.*

Q. This project is potentially feasible, but who will decide if it will be done and is there a political will to do it? The Republicans are in control but are split on the issue, with some pro-rail and others are not. Do you see any stumbling blocks for the funding?

A. *We don't have answers to this. We are pleased that the three states who participated in Phase I are proceeding to secure commitments for Phase II which will investigate options for implementation.*

Q. Do you see problems with NIMBY'ism (Not In My Back Yard) from residents living along the lines when the train is coming back, especially in New Hampshire?
A. *We see issues associated with this. However, these will be looked at as part of the environmental process. It's too premature to be able to answer this question with any details..*

Q. There is the example of the Montreal and Detroit Express way where Roll On, Roll off service is offered for tractor trailers, would you consider this option?

A. *We have to look at many things to maximize the benefits of the service, including improvements to freight service..*

Q. 6h20 min for the bus travel between Montreal and Boston is too low according to my experience. Why did you use this travel time?

A. *This is the published schedule time for bus service.*

Q. If the study shows the service is feasible now, why wait 22 years?

A. *How much of a priority this service is for the public will determine how quickly it can be implemented. It's possible to develop the service before 2025.*

Q. But don't things change profoundly over time? Will it still be feasible in 2025?

A. *We'd like to hope a service could be offered sooner that 2025 if desired by the public but we are working with projections of feasibility based on a reasonable time line projection.*

Q. Who will run the train service? Amtrak? Another agency?

A. *We're not certain at this time. A range of options will be considered.*

Q. Did you look at including the possible ridership coming to Montreal and Boston from outside the corridor who might used this train service?

A. *In Phase II we will look at interconnections in more detail. For Phase I we wanted to have conservative numbers.*

Q. How are freight train companies reacting to the study?

A. *They have been generally supportive of the study. We have been communicating with them. Some are sceptical but we have not uncovered any negative comments about shared use of the rail lines.*

Q. Besides Montreal and Boston, what other city pairs seem to have high ridership?

A. *We have looked at that but have found ridership generally spread out along the corridor which we find encouraging.*

Q. Wasn't there a train link between North and South Stations in Boston?

A. *Yes, but it was only for limited freight movements and was gone by the 1960's.*

Q. Why did you not consider an electrified train for the corridor?

A. *The general installation cost of electrifying the corridor would be too much and non-electrified trains are available and in development.*

Q. How many people travel between Montreal and Boston on all modes (car, bus, airplane)?

A. *I can't recall the total number but that figure is known.*